



REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present remarks are submitted in response to the official action dated July 11, 2005. This response is intended to overcome all of the objections and rejections made by the Examiner in that official action. Reconsideration of the application in view of the present amendment and remarks is respectfully requested.

In his last Office Action, the Examiner indicated that Claim 6 contained allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intermediate claims. Claim 6 has now been canceled and presented as currently amended independent claim 1 with only some minor changes in language for clarity. The claim is believed to be allowable and an indication of the allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 5, and 7-13 are dependent on currently amended claim 1 and are believed to be allowable (at least from a subject matter standpoint) for this reason. An indication of the allowability of these claims is also requested.

Original claims 2, 3, 6, and 14-20 have been canceled.

New claims 21-30 are being presented which are believed to define patentable subject matter over the prior art of record. Briefly, newly presented independent claim 21, and the claims dependent thereon, claims 22-27, are directed to the use of a stencil for forming a multiple fluid bearing apparatus from a unitary membrane, all as disclosed and claimed. Newly presented independent claim 28, and the claims dependent thereon, claims 29 and 30, are directed to a multiple air bearing base having a layered structure including a layered stencil assembly and a manifold layer for dividing the source of pressurized air into multiple equal air streams for each bearing, all as disclosed and claimed.

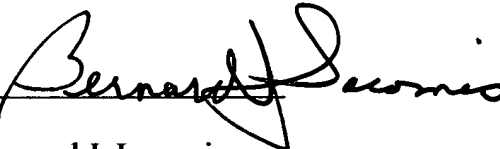
The above noted newly presented claims are believed to patentably distinguish over the cited prior art of record for the reasons noted above and others.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted

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